



American Rhododendron Society

Eugene Chapter Newsletter

~~ Message to our Members ~~

November 2020

Wow! The response to our very first ZOOM Chapter Meeting was very encouraging! Even though using ZOOM is a new thing for so many of us, there were 17 people in attendance at the meeting, via 11 devices. Those attending included members of the Siuslaw Chapter, the Willamette Chapter, and the Eureka Chapter. If you were not able to join the October ZOOM meeting, we encourage you to mark your calendar for November 18th, and plan to join the November ZOOM meeting. Look for more information about that meeting on page 2 of this newsletter. Please ZOOM with us - it's not too hard to do and it's lots of fun!

One of the positive benefits of using the ZOOM platforms for chapter meetings is that several ARS District 4 chapters are sharing invitations with our chapter to join their ZOOM meetings. Details regarding two of these chapter meetings can be found on page 8 of this newsletter. It will be a great way to interact with our sister chapters, meet new friends, and learn even more about the wonderful world of rhododendrons!

Our Eugene ARS Treasurer, Nancy Burns, reports that she has received a good number of membership renewals, although there are some associate and regular members that she still needs to hear from! She encourages us to renew our memberships by the end of December in order to continue receiving the **ARS Journal** without interruption. Many thanks to all the regular and associate chapter members who did respond very quickly and a special thank you to those who have made a donation to our chapter.

As always, we would love to share what's been happening in YOUR gardens in future newsletters! Please send pictures, descriptions, and stories to our newsletter editor, Dana Manion, at danajmanion@gmail.com ... the deadline to be included in the December newsletter is Wednesday, December 2nd.

Chapter Meetings

Our Chapter Meetings are typically held at 7 p.m. on the third Wednesday of the month, October through March, unless otherwise specified. Unfortunately, face-to-face meetings are currently suspended due to Covid-19.

Upcoming ZOOM Chapter Meetings

Wednesday, November 18

6:30 p.m., Social time

7:00 p.m. Meeting &

Speaker

Wednesday, December 15

6:30 p.m., Social time

7:00 p.m. Meeting &

Speaker

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November ARS Eugene ZOOM Chapter Meeting Information



R. christii (New Guinea)



R. kaempferi (Japan)



R. myrtifolium (Europe)



R. proteoides (China)



R. occidentale (North America)

The November meeting of the ARS Eugene Chapter will be held via ZOOM on Wednesday, November 18th. We will gather for social time beginning at 6:30 p.m. and the meeting and presentation will follow at 7:00 pm To request the link for the meeting, please email:

ARS.EugeneChapter@gmail.com

Our own Harold Greer will serve as presenter for this meeting. Harold's presentation, "*Rhododendrons, The World in Your Garden*", will be an educational and entertaining exploration of how rhododendrons originate from points all around the world. He will also address questions such as, "Where in the world do the species we commonly call deciduous azaleas come from?" "How about evergreen azaleas?" "Are there native rhododendrons in the Southern Hemisphere?" All these questions will be answered with wonderful pictures. You will be surprised how much of the world is actually represented in your garden!

~ In Memoriam ~

We are saddened to report the passing of Janice O. Gerdemann in early September. Janice was a member of the ARS Siuslaw Chapter and a friend to many members of the ARS Eugene Chapter. Janice and her late husband, Jim, moved to Yachats, Oregon, in 1980 and Janice became an active member of the Yachats community. She assisted her husband Jim in creating and caring for their large garden, later to become the Gerdemann Botanic Preserve. Janice was an environmentalist and actively worked to save the 804 Trail along the Yachats coastline. She was also active in the League of Women Voters and the Unitarian Universalist Church and she enjoyed hosting friends, family, and plant enthusiasts who traveled to Yachats. Janice leaves a lasting legacy in Yachats that will benefit generations of people to come. Janice and Jim Gerdemann created and endowed the Gerdemann Botanic Preserve that contains rare plants and has a conservation easement, portions of which are available to the public. Residents and visitors to Yachats will benefit from her contributions in perpetuity.

ARS Eugene Chapter Officers

Terry Henderson, President
Jack Olson, Vice President
Emily Aune, Secretary
Nancy Burns, Treasurer

Directors

Helen Baxter
Tom Beatty
Grace Fowler-Gore
Dana Manion
Gordon Wylie

A Report from The O. Howard Hinsdale Garden by Gordon Wylie

Though it often feels as though we've been in lockdown all year - or more - 2020 began pretty much as any other year for the first two or three months. Early flowers, including magnolia blooms spotted as we slowed while driving by the Hinsdale Garden in mid-February, were a friendly reminder of winter drawing to a close and a reminder of many more gardens and flowers to be enjoyed in the weeks and months ahead.

In mid-March, as we were about to deliver a pickup load of plants to the Reedsport Friends of Hinsdale Garden to sell during hosted open garden days, the Bureau of Land Management cancelled the first scheduled date - April 11. A few days later, the Bureau announced the remaining two hosted days in May had been eliminated. We protested full cancellation as premature but, as we know now, the folks at BLM correctly anticipated rapidly growing restrictions brought about by the now familiar, and definitely unwelcome, Covid 19.

So how did the garden do during this decidedly different year? Let's take a look. Early bad news was abrupt failure of the footbridge providing access between the main garden and its eastern portion. Some problems with that bridge were noticed and repaired last year. Further interim fixes were expected to maintain use at least through this year while planning for a replacement. But defects accelerated rapidly, mandating immediate removal for safety reasons; this action also saved permanent footings for potential use with a new bridge. Funding for a replacement is a priority request this year, the Bureau goal being a new bridge in place in 2021.

Among good news was completion of underground main lines through the entire garden for the automated irrigation system. A building housing the water intake from Reedsport, outgoing lines to irrigation zones, the master control and related equipment now stand at a central point. BLM Botanist Jennie Sperling and this year's summer intern, Jordan Mao, have been busy fine tuning the amount of water supplied to all the plants and trees throughout the garden. This project, spurred in part by an ARS Endowment Fund grant, is a significant improvement over temporary measures used since renovation began more than ten years ago.

Another improvement is a structure for permanent information signs near where the Hinsdale home once stood. This is funded through a donation from the Reedsport Friends group derived from plant sales and donations on hosted open garden days. During a mid-October visit, we also saw a good number of (air layer propagated) recently planted rhododendron clones, and the garden overall was looking good.

Of course none of these things happen without people, and some others should be recognized. Steve Samuels, now retired archeologist with the BLM but continuing as a volunteer, brings his special expertise. City of Reedsport community support, primarily through the Friends, is headed by longtime chair Sue Martino. John Harper, BLM Recreation Planner, supports through the inevitable paper work and more. Glenn Harkleroad, Manager at the Coos Bay office (growing Hinsdale sourced plants in his home garden) is a ready advocate.

A beautiful redwood bench in memory of Bob MacIntyre has been completed. We hope virus restrictions will be in the past so as to allow its dedication in Hinsdale Garden next year.

Photos from our gardens ...

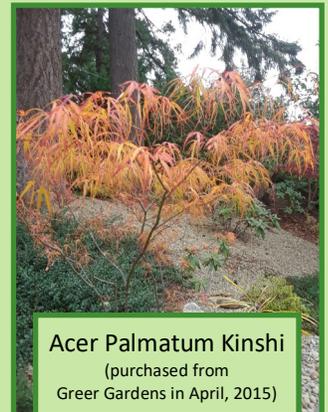


Fall Colors

Photos from the garden of Grace, Dena & Ed Fowler-Gore

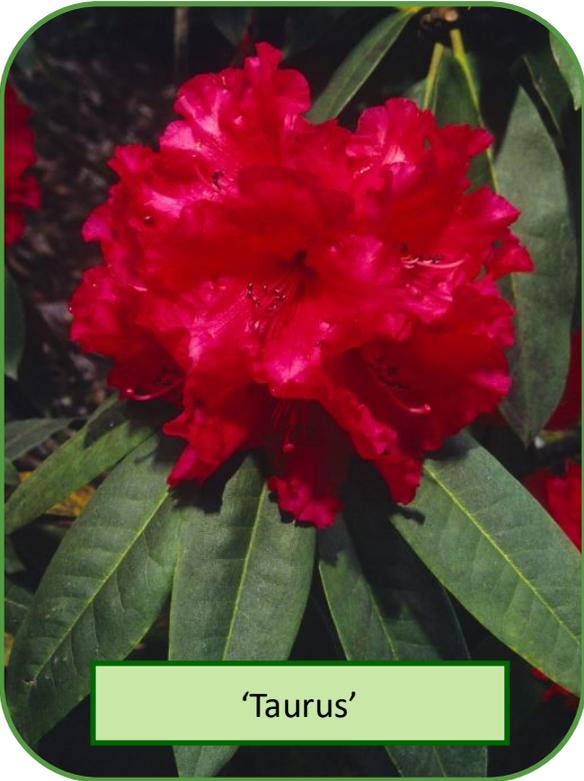


Late Blooming Rhody



Acer Palmatum Kinshi
(purchased from Greer Gardens in April, 2015)

~~ Rhododendron of the Month ~~
 'Grace Seabrook' or 'Taurus' ?
 by Harold Greer



'Taurus'

I can write the exact same thing about both. These two hybrids have the same parents, 'The Honorable Jean Marie de Montague' x *R. strigillosum*. The crosses were made by two different people in different places, though at about the same time. 'Grace Seabrook' was hybridized by Cecil Seabrook in the Tacoma, Washington, area. 'Taurus' was hybridized by Dr. Frank Mossman of Vancouver, Washington. I never met Cecil Seabrook, but I knew the only person he gave cuttings to, who was John Eichelser, very well. Some of you may know the rhododendron 'Lori Eichelser' which was named after his daughter, but I digress from the subject at hand.

'Taurus', as I said, came from Dr. Frank Mossman who was a great friend. Frank was better known in the rhododendron world than Cecil and consequently 'Taurus' is better known. 'Taurus' also received a Superior Plant Award from the ARS. Only six people have ever produced a plant that received a Superior Plant Award, Halfdan Lem, Warren Berg, Frank Mossman, Charles Dexter, David Leach and "embarrassingly" Harold Greer. Again, I digress.

I like both plants and to me there is no difference in quality with the two plants. The only difference between the two plants is that 'Taurus' has red growth and flower buds and 'Grace Seabrook' has green bud. In flower, I can't tell them apart and I have 10' plants of both planted side by side, plus an extra 'Grace Seabrook' planted by our entry way. Both 'Taurus' and 'Grace Seabrook' are generally sterile and will not make seed or give pollen, although Merle Sanders, one of our long passed Eugene Chapter members did collect one open pollinated seed pod from which he grew one weak seedling that finally flowered.

Now the facts about the plants, "just the facts, ma'am", remember the old TV program Dragnet and Sargeant Joe Friday?

- Height in 10 years: 5 feet, or maybe 6 feet in good conditions
- Hardiness: -5°F
- Color: Bright red
- Rating: 4-5/4/4 (flower / plant & foliage / performance)
- Ease of propagation: Medium
- Vigor: Good



'Grace Seabrook'



'Taurus' with red bud



'Grace Seabrook' with green bud



Side by Side: 'Grace Seabrook' on the left and 'Taurus' on the right



'Grace Seabrook' just inside the entrance to The Springs at Greer Gardens

Images of 'Grace Seabrook' & 'Taurus'

ARS 2021 Spring Conference June 3 - 6, 2021

Rhododendrons Down East in Nova Scotia: *Exploring the Atlantic Region*

Planning is ongoing for a "virtual hybrid" convention, offering video garden tours, online guest speakers, and as many live, in-person elements as possible. Come join us 'down east' as Nova Scotians say. Experience our unique blending of history, contemporary culture and natural beauty. Come to see our splendid rhodos and lush gardens, and we'll throw in dramatic seacoasts, a vibrant capital city, and the world's highest tides as extras. The American poet, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, called this the Land of Evangeline; to our Indigenous people it is Mi'kma'ki. By whatever name, Nova Scotia is a special place to visit.

Details will be updated at the [convention website](#).

Annapolis Valley, Nova Scotia



~~ News from Hendricks Park ~~
 by Emily Aune
 "Recreating History - In Our Own Little Way"

In my early days of working at Hendricks, circa 2009, I was going through a file cabinet and discovered a 1985 news clipping from *The Oregonian* describing a heroic garden endeavor. The story was about a sixty-year old rhododendron that the Hendricks Park gardeners acquired from the estate of Carl Phetteplace on the banks of the McKenzie River in Leaburg, Oregon.



Carl Phetteplace was an avid hybridizer and collector of rhododendrons whose estate included three thousand rhododendrons. This particular plant was from wild-collected seeds from plant explorers in China, who sent seeds to James Barto in the 1930's. Barto started the plant which eventually made it to the Phetteplace estate in 1951.

In 1985, Phetteplace donated the plant to Hendricks Park. The park gardeners headed to the estate to carefully dig a root ball around the now twelve-foot tall plant. The root-ball was nine feet wide and five feet deep, weighing a total of 16 tons! They wrapped the enormous root ball in burlap and heavy chains and slowly trailered it from Leaburg to Eugene, where they planted the rhododendron in its new home on what is now the Founders Path in Hendricks Park.

I decided to search for the historic plant in the park, and knew from the article that it was a *Rhododendron calophytum*, a plant native to China and known for its unusually long, skinny leaves and large stigma. Based on the account I had of the plant's white to pink flowers and deep red center, I combed through the garden looking for such a plant, but found nothing that fit the description.

I consulted with a co-worker who had worked at Hendricks for ten years prior to me. **(continued on page 7)**

(continued from page 6) He vaguely remembered hearing that the plant had survived many years, but suggested that my chances of finding it were slim, as it would now be about ninety-five years old and presumably had succumbed to age.

Then one day last summer, while removing thimbleberries from a section of the Founders Path that had become overgrown, I happened upon an old plaque, mostly buried in the ground. I dug it up, wiped off the dirt and read "*R. calophytum*." I realized that I had found a location of a *R. calophytum*, possibly even the *R. calophytum* I'd been searching for. Unfortunately, I also confirmed there was no longer a plant there.

Once planting season began, a group of volunteers and I cleared out the lady ferns and thimbleberries that had moved in and opened up the area. We added additional planting mix of soil mixed with fir bark, and raised the level of the bed to add nutrients and provide drainage.

A local Rhododendron Society member and plant enthusiast, Jack Olson, had graciously donated a *R. calophytum* to the park a couple of years ago. It was finally time to transplant it to its new home, and the Founders Path seemed the ideal place.

While digging the hole for the new plant I hit something hard with the shovel. The "tink-tink" told me I had hit metal. I reached down, dug with my hands, pulled a little and felt something give way. Suddenly I realized it was an old chain - the same old bundling chain that had been left lying in the ground since 1985 when the sixteen-ton rhododendron was placed in this very same spot decades earlier!



R. calophytum
(image copied from an online source)



Newly cleared and empty spot on the Founders Trail, along with the old sign

Can you see the old chain in the lower right corner of this photo?



New baby *Rhododendron calophytum* in its new home. Grow, new littly rhody, grow!

American Rhododendron Society
Eugene Chapter
P.O. Box 50004
Eugene, OR 97405

You're Invited!

Please consider attending other District 4 ZOOM Chapter meetings scheduled in November:

ARS Willamette Chapter

Wednesday, November 11

6:30 pm Social Time; meeting starts at 7 pm

Presenter: **Giselle Schoniger**, Organic Gardening
Educator at Kellogg Garden Products

Rhody Revival. Restore, Revive & Regenerate: Building Healthy Soils Organically

What is "good" soil and how do you know if you have it? Learn the basics of how to restore, revive and regenerate your garden beds.

To request the link for the meeting, please email:

ARS.EugeneChapter@gmail.com

ARS Portland Chapter

Thursday, November 19

6:30 pm Social Time; meeting starts at 7 pm

Presenter: **Mike Stewart**

Botanical Gems & Their Journey to Your Garden

Stories of those very early explorers who broke trails into previously unknown regions of the world searching for new botanical treasures, centering around plant exploration on the North American continent, with a special emphasis on the Pacific Northwest and the adventures and discoveries of the great Scottish botanist, David Douglas.

To request the link for the meeting, please email:

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